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[US Department of the Interior News Briefing](#)



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DOI In The News

Senators' Silence Kills Probe Into Zinke's Alleged Threats Against Alaska Senator.

[The Hill](#) (8/30, Henry) reports the Interior Department's Office of Inspector General is about to end "its investigation into Secretary Ryan Zinke's alleged threats against an Alaska senator during an ObamaCare fight last month after the lawmaker and her in-state colleague refused to participate in the probe." Interior's Deputy Inspector General Mary Kendall wrote to House Democrats who had asked for the investigation, saying that "her office 'does not believe it could meaningfully investigate the matter further' because Alaska Sens. Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan, both Republicans, declined to be interviewed as part of the inquiry."

Also covering the story were the [Associated Press](#) (8/30), [Reuters](#) (8/30, Beech), [CNN](#) (8/30, Tatum), the [Washington Examiner](#) (8/30, Phillips), [Talking Points Memo](#) (8/30, Ollstein), the [Daily Caller](#) (8/30, Pearce), the [Alaska Dispatch News](#) (8/30), the [Alaska Public Radio Network](#) (8/30, Ruskin), [KTUU-TV Anchorage \(AK\)](#) Anchorage, AK (8/30), and [KTVF-TV Fairbanks \(AK\)](#) Fairbanks, AK (8/30).

Trump Donation Will Help Restore Historic Home Near Confederate Statue.

The [Washington Post](#) (8/30, Moyer) reports that the National Park Service announced in July that it would use some of the funds from President Trump's donation of his first quarter salary "to restore a historic home at Antietam National Battlefield in Maryland." Next summer, work will begin "on property that includes a 24-foot statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee astride his horse, Traveller." The statue "sits on a bluff about 250 feet from the Newcomer House that will benefit from Trump's donation." The Post adds that the donation was made "before Trump called for the preservation of Confederate memorials following deadly violence in Charlottesville." Heather Swift, a spokeswoman for the Department of the Interior, "said the National Park Service, not Trump, selected the property, and that his donation will not be used to restore the statue."

States Win Hollow Victory Over Trump's Favors To Oil, Gas & Coal.

[Courthouse News](#) (8/30, Iovino) reports that "California and New Mexico won a hollow victory on Wednesday, as a federal judge found the U.S. Department of Interior unlawfully postponed a royalties rule for oil, gas and coal companies' benefit – but refused to reinstate the rule." California and New Mexico sued the Interior Department in April, "arguing its postponement of a new royalties rule this past February, after it took effect on Jan. 1, deprived states of an estimated \$72 million to \$85 million in royalties, which they depend on to help fund crucial services like public education." Meanwhile, the Interior Department "had already proposed a new rule to roll back the increased royalty valuations on April 4, with a public comment period ending May 4," and "the repeal is set to take effect on Sept. 6." U.S. Magistrate Judge Elizabeth Laporte

“found the department effectively repealed the royalties rule in February after it had taken effect and without allowing for public comment in violation of the Administrative Procedure Act.” However, “she said making companies comply with higher royalty valuations for a few days before the rule is repealed on Sept. 6 would be ‘unduly disruptive’ for the oil, gas and coal industries,” and “she declined to vacate the Interior Department’s postponement of the rule.”

Additional coverage was provided by [KXJZ-FM](#) Sacramento, CA (8/30, Bradford).

Please Come To Grand Junction, Towns To Tell BLM.

The [Grand Junction \(CO\) Daily Sentinel](#) (8/31, Harmon) reports that the Associated Governments of Northwest Colorado “voted Wednesday to encourage the counties and cities within its area to write” to Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke urging him to move the Bureau of Land Management to Grand Junction. Zinke is reportedly “considering moving the headquarters of three agencies – the BLM, Fish and Wildlife Service and the Bureau of Reclamation – to Denver.”

Bizarrely, The State Department And Interior Department Just Commented On Trump’s Tax Plan.

[The Week](#) (8/30, Stanek) said that it was strange to see Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson weighing in on President Trump’s tax reform plan. According to the article, “though Zinke’s domain is federal lands and natural resources,” he “couldn’t help but comment on how great Trump’s tax reform plan would be for the American people.” Zinke tied his statement “back to the Interior Department by claiming that Trump’s tax reforms would mean Americans ‘will have more money in their pockets’ to spend on trips to national parks, and that businesses would have more money to ‘invest in our public lands.’”

Blowing The Whistle On Trump’s Mistreatment Of Civil Servants.

For the “Pundits” blog of [The Hill](#) (8/30, Friedman, Geltzer, Contributors), Robert Friedman and Joshua Geltzer, who serve as institute fellow and executive director, respectively, at Georgetown University Law Center’s Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection, writes that “since Jan. 20, some civil servants, and especially certain senior civil servants, have fallen victim to an administration uninterested in their hard-earned experience and apparently intolerant of questioning of the administration’s pre-existing ideological commitments.” For this reason, the Georgetown University Law Center’s Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection has “just filed a letter with the U.S. Office of Special Counsel on behalf of 12 leading scholars of constitutional, administrative and civil service law in support” of Joel Clement, a reassigned senior executive at the Interior Department. The authors argue that “Clement’s case presents an important opportunity for the Office of Special Counsel to send a clear signal to the administration.” They urge the office to “carefully police the line between mission-inspired reassignments and retaliatory ones to ensure that President Trump’s vow to ‘drain the swamp’ does not become a full-blown political purge of the civil service.”

Breaking The Rules: Zinke And Trump Go To War On Regulation.

In an op-ed for the [Missoula \(MT\) Independent](#) (8/31, Leiter), Amanda C. Leiter, a professor at American University’s College of Law, and former deputy assistant secretary, Land and Minerals Management, at the Interior Department, writes that “laws and regulations can always be reformed and improved, but the real threat to America’s natural resources, and to the health of our democracy, is the Trump administration’s nontransparent, one-sided assault on common-sense regulation.” Leiter touts the importance of the rulemaking process and criticizes Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke for catering to the fossil fuel industry, while shutting out other interests. Leiter concludes that the Trump Administration’s “disdain for open and participatory rulemaking is unlawful and undermines our democracy.”

Trump Administration Falsely Blames Lawsuits For Forest Fires.

In an op-ed for the [Helena \(MT\) Independent Record](#) (8/30, Garrity), Mike Garrity, the executive director of the Alliance for the Wild Rockies, writes that “Ryan Zinke, Sonny Perdue, Steve Daines and Greg Gianforte followed Trump’s lead in using alternative facts in their recent press conference near the Lolo Peak Fire.” According to Garrity, “the Trump administration apparently believes that it is because of lawsuits that we have forest fires during this exceptionally hot, dry, and windy summer.” However, Garrity points out that “there is no lawsuit in the Lolo Peak area, and the Lolo Peak area has already undergone extensive logging.”

In an op-ed for the [Bozeman \(MT\) Daily Chronicle](#) (8/31, Scalia), Dr. Joseph Scalia III,

director of Northern Rockies Psychoanalytic Institute, criticizes the group of Republican politicians for supporting “a federal 2018 budget that would cut \$350 million from forest fire fighting and prevention programs.” Scalia claims that the politicians are “spouting dumbed-down ideology while ignoring wildland fire science in their attempt to sway public policy towards support of an extractive industry that will be regulated by an underfunded and understaffed Forest Service.”

Hey President Trump, Leave The San Gabriel Mountains Alone.

In his column for the [Los Angeles Times](#) (8/30, Lopez), Steve Lopez raises concerns that the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument may be scaled back. Lopez thinks that “it’s unlikely that the San Gabes would be in for any major scarring by commercial enterprise; other monuments around the country appear to be in far greater danger.” However, he notes that “some San Gabriels boosters remain worried, with possibilities that include expansion of a ski resort into the monument, erection of cellphone towers and tunneling for the bullet train.”

Our Voice: National Monuments Still Need Defense.

In an editorial, the [Tri-City Herald \(WA\)](#) (8/30) rallies support to preserve the Cascade-Siskiyou, the Bears Ears and Grand Staircase-Escalante national monuments. The paper asserts that “reviewing the national monuments was an unnecessary process that never should have been started.” The paper urges “all those who weighed in to protect the Hanford Reach” to “help Oregon and Utah with the same passionate resolve.”

National Parks, A National Legacy.

In an editorial, the [Valley News \(VT\)](#) (8/30) touts the importance of the national parks and related sites, which “have shown the wisdom of preserving — rather than exploiting — the best of America and its natural resources.” The paper hopes that President Trump won’t follow Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke’s recommendation “to reduce the size of three national monuments and roll back protections in them.” The editorial says that if he does, then “it would be in keeping with his administration’s apparent mission of achieving a clean sweep of environmental degradation, involving the nation’s air, water and land. ”

A Year Worth Celebrating At Katahdin Woods And Waters.

In an op-ed for the [Bangor \(ME\) Daily News](#) (8/30, Farmer), David Farmer, a political and media consultant in Portland, is heartened by Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke’s “promising — if not complete — news about the review” of the Katahdin Woods and Waters National Monument. According to Farmer, “there are still people who oppose the monument, but their numbers are waning.” he also notes that “businesses throughout the region are reporting spikes in visitation and so far between the National Park Service and the endowment created by Ellitsville Plantation, the foundation which donated the land for the monument plus an endowment of \$20 million, about a half a million dollars have been invested in the region so far.”

Daunted Courage: Is Ryan Zinke Losing Touch With Montana?

In an op-ed for the [Missoula \(MT\) Independent](#) (8/31, Brooks), Dan Brooks satirically analyzes whether Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has lost his “Montana values.” Brooks compares Zinke’s record as a defender of public lands as a congressman, and now, as secretary, “his commitment to making public lands available to all Americans—particularly those Americans who own mining and drilling corporations.” Brooks figures Zinke is “as much a Montanan as he ever was, which is to say he lives somewhere else most of the time but keeps wearing a giant hat.”

Bureau Of Indian Affairs

Ruling Paves Way For Freedmen’s Citizenship In Cherokee Nation.

The [Tulsa \(OK\) World](#) (8/30, Hinchey) reports that “the descendants of Cherokee freedmen have a right to tribal citizenship,” the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia ruled Wednesday.” The holding is “an important victory in the freedmen’s longstanding legal battle to secure rights to Cherokee citizenship. The court held “that the Treaty of 1866, which entitled freedmen to ‘all the rights of native Cherokees,’ takes priority over the tribe’s constitution.”

Feds Urge Justices To Spurn NY Town’s Tribal Land Challenge.

[Law360](#) (8/30, Westney) reports that “the federal government has urged the U.S. Supreme Court

not to hear a New York town's bid to overturn a Second Circuit decision approving the government's decision to take land into trust for the Oneida Indian Nation, saying the Oneidas meet the requirements to have their land taken into trust under the Indian Land Consolidation Act."

Tribe Gets \$3.9 Million From BIA For Reforestation.

The [Omak-Okanogan County \(WA\) Chronicle](#) (8/30, Camp) reports that "the Colville Confederated Tribes are getting nearly \$3.9 million from the federal government for reforestation efforts in the wake of the 2015 fire season."

Additional Coverage: Ex-Federal Officer Accused Of Blackmailing Woman Into Sex.

Additional coverage that "a former law enforcement officer with the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Montana is facing federal charges accusing him of coercing a woman into having sex and then lying about it to investigators" was provided by the [AP](#) (8/30).

Bureau Of Land Management

BLM Land Transfers Near County Approval.

The [Jackson Hole \(WY\) News & Guide](#) (8/30, Gross) reports that "three agreements are up for consideration by county commissioners Tuesday that outline terms for the transfer of several Bureau of Land Management land parcels to Teton County." Following approval, "the county can draft legislation for U.S. Sen. John Barrasso to introduce to Congress to realize the transfers." It is part of "the latest movement on an effort that has been ongoing for more than a decade as the BLM works to pass off ownership of 24 parcels scattered along the Snake River."

BLM To Offer Three Parcels In Oil And Gas Lease Sale.

The [Elko \(NV\) Daily Free Press](#) (8/30) reports that the Bureau of Land Management will "offer three parcels in Nye County totaling approximately 3,680 acres in the Battle Mountain District at its September quarterly oil and gas lease sale." Bidding will begin on Sept. 12.

BLM Approves Decision To Remove Wild Horses.

The [Wyoming Business Report](#) (8/30, Mechling) reports that the Bureau of Land Management "announced its decision Tuesday to take 1,560 adult wild horses from the Great Divide Basin, Salt Wells Creek, and Adobe Town herd management areas." The roundup will "begin after Sept. 15 to restore herd populations to appropriate management levels, according to a press release."

McClintock Spearheads Proposal To Stop Protecting Wild Horses.

In an op-ed for the [Sierra Star \(CA\)](#) (8/30, White), Joseph H. White opposes that the Trump Administration's budget that "calls for the end of the prohibition of slaughtering wild horses and burros and "destroying" the 45,000-plus healthy horses and burros in holding pens, and up to 40,000 healthy animals on the range." Rep. Tom McClintock has "spearheaded the proposal, claiming that the wild horses and burros are starving to death when in reality almost every animal that has been captured in the BLM helicopter roundups would be graded as good to excellent (a score of four to six) on the Henneke condition score system for horses." According to White, "the truth is that the wild horses and burros are competing successfully for forage against the private livestock that outnumber them on the federal ranges, that were designated by Congress to be managed primarily for their benefit and are not yet overpopulated."

Bureau Of Reclamation

New Groundwater Basin Studies For Arizona And New Mexico.

The [AP](#) (8/31) reports that the Bureau of Reclamation is "launching two new groundwater basin studies, one in Arizona and the other in New Mexico." BOR Acting Commissioner Alan Mikkelsen "says growing imbalances between supply and demand are affecting many basins throughout the West." According to the article, "the groundwater is being over-drafted by about 230,000 acre-feet per year and causing severe caving-in of land in the basins, putting critical infrastructure at risk."

For Reclamation, Water Use And Small Hydropower Go Hand In Hand.

[Hydroworld](#) (8/30, Ingram) reports that the Bureau of Reclamation “recently announced it had selected 43 projects to receive a total of \$20.9 million for water delivery efficiency improvements.” The funds are being awarded as part of the WaterSMART project, “which aims to improve water conservation and sustainability, helping water resource managers make sound decisions about water use.” The bureau “says that when leveraged with non-federal funding sources, these projects will complete more than \$101 million in improvements.” The article notes that “of the 43 projects selected, eight involve hydroelectric generation.”

There’s Success In Money-for-water Programs.

The [High Country \(CO\) News](#) (8/30, Tory) reports that in the Colorado River Basin, a money-for-water program is winning over skeptical farmers and ranchers. The pilot program was “launched in 2014 by the four largest municipal water providers in the Colorado River basin along with the Bureau of Reclamation.” The goal is to “see how complicated it would be to pay ranchers to use less water on their fields and instead let the water flow down the Green, Colorado and San Juan rivers to Lake Powell and Lake Mead, the two biggest water storage buckets in the Colorado River system.” According to the article, “after three years, the initiative, known as the ‘System Conservation Pilot Program,’ proved popular...but water officials called a halt to the program after this year until they work out some big challenges.”

Bureau Of Safety And Environmental Enforcement

Fallout From Harvey To Disrupt Energy Markets Around The World.

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (8/30, Sider, Yang) reports Tropical Storm Harvey is disrupting the flow of oil and petroleum worldwide because of the growing influence of the US in the global energy industry. The production disruptions will cause supply shortfalls in gasoline, chemicals, plastics and crude exports, and consumers from Houston to Beijing will be affected. The US Gulf Coast has become an increasingly critical link in the global energy chain, as shipments from the region now account for 6 percent of global demand for oil and liquid petroleum fuels. A second [Wall Street Journal](#) (8/30, Matthews, Sider) reports that more than a dozen refineries have been affected by the storm, while IHS Markit says more than 3 million bpd of refining capacity in Texas remained shut Wednesday mornings. Port closures are complicating refineries’ problems, as Port Houston has warned shippers it is likely closed to large vessels at least through the weekend. US Coast Guard officials said it could be weeks before large container ships and oil tankers can safely navigate the Houston Ship Channel. [Reuters](#) (8/30, Seba) reports Reuters estimates and company reports show that about 4.2 million barrels of US refining capacity has been shut because of the storm. More refineries could close now that Harvey has made landfall in Louisiana, where an additional 3.3 million bpd are produced. Anthony Scott, managing director of analytics at BTU Analytics, said, “We’re still pretty early in the process of figuring out the extent of any damage from the flooding. ... If flooding has washed out a pipeline or something else, you won’t find out until the water has receded.” The [Washington Times](#) (8/30, Wolfgang) reports Nicole Leonard, a senior project consultant at Platts Analytics Oil and Gas Consulting, said, “This is impacting the whole world. ... There’s so much more in getting back to normal than I think anyone understands.” Leonard said the slowdown in refining is hampering deliveries around the world, as foreign markets are not getting the usual cargoes of fuel from US suppliers.

Fish And Wildlife Service

Groups Sue To Protect Yellowstone Bears As Hunts Anticipated.

The [AP](#) (8/30, Brown) reports that “wildlife advocates and a Montana Indian tribe have asked a U.S. court to restore protections for grizzly bears in and around Yellowstone National Park so that trophy hunting of the fearsome animals would not be allowed.” The Northern Cheyenne Tribe, the Humane Society and several conservation groups “filed three lawsuits Tuesday and Wednesday in federal court in Montana, challenging the government’s recent move to lift protections.” Idaho, Montana and Wyoming “are planning limited public hunting of the region’s roughly 700 bears, although no hunts are expected this year,” but “critics say there is already too much pressure on the bear population as climate change affects what they eat and as conflicts with humans result in dozens being killed every year.”

[Reuters](#) (8/30, Zuckerman) reports that WildEarth Guardians “as well as a coalition including the Sierra Club and Northern Cheyenne Tribe separately sued Republican President Donald Trump’s administration in U.S. District Court in Missoula, Montana to prevent removal of the bears from the U.S. list of endangered and threatened species. ‘Grizzlies have disappeared in nearly 98 percent of their range in the Lower 48; now is not the time to strip these bears of vital federal protections,’ WildEarth Guardians carnivore advocate Kelly Nokes said in a telephone interview.” The lawsuits, “which name U.S. Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as plaintiffs, claim that illegal killing and climate changes have caused declines in the grizzlies’ food supplies and habitat loss.”

Also reporting are [The Hill](#) (8/30, Cama), the [Washington Times](#) (8/30, Richardson), the [Bozeman \(MT\) Daily Chronicle](#) (8/30, Wright), the [Seattle Post-Intelligencer](#) (8/30, Connelly), [Yellowstone Insider](#) (8/30, Reichard), and [Law360](#) (8/30, Rodriguez).

Commissioners Oppose Wolf Recovery Draft.

The [Ruidoso \(NM\) News](#) (8/30, Stallings) reports that “as in past Mexican gray wolf recovery plans, the Lincoln County Commission approved a letter and reaffirmed a resolution in opposition to a draft released for public comment by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.” Commissioners were “following the recommendations last week of the board of supervisors of the Upper Hondo Water and Soil Conservation District and of the members of the county’s Land and Natural Resources Advisory Committee.” They “voted to submit a new letter of objection by the Aug. 29 deadline.”

National Park Service

Yosemite Name Changes: Lawsuit In Dispute Inches Forward.

The [Fresno \(CA\) Bee](#) (8/30, Appleton) reports that the National Park Service and “Yosemite’s former concessionaire, Delaware North, remain embroiled in a legal battle over the names of some of the park’s most cherished landmarks: The Ahwahnee, Curry Village, Badger Pass, Wawona Hotel.” The two sides are “more than \$40 million apart on the amount owed.” The article says that “given the distance between the parties and how slowly the courts move in such cases, both sides agreed this week that it could be years before a resolution is reached.”

Inoculations Give Endangered California Frog A Shot At Life.

The [AP](#) (8/30, Smith) reports that “endangered California frogs are getting an immunity boost from scientists who are scooping them up from remote Sierra Nevada ponds and sending them to big city zoos for inoculation, giving them a fighting chance to beat extinction, officials said Wednesday.” Aquatic ecologist Danny Boiano of the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, “who has led the three-year project” to help the mountain yellow-legged frog, “said it appears to be paying off.” His team will next “study their frogs to determine if it’s working.”

Smoke From Wildfires Forces Closure Of Lodge In Glacier Park.

The [AP](#) (8/30) reports that “smoke from wildfires has led Xanterra Parks and Resorts to close Lake McDonald Lodge in Glacier National Park for the season.” The lodge “closed Wednesday, nearly a month ahead of schedule.” According to Xanterra, “the Sprague fire burning in the park was not threatening the lodge, but heavy smoke was settling in the area, at times creating hazardous air quality conditions.”

Also reporting are the [Great Falls \(MT\) Tribune](#) (8/30) and the [Missoula Current \(MT\)](#) (8/30).

Attorney: Arkansas Man Fatally Shot By Rangers Had BB Gun.

The [AP](#) (8/30) reports that “an attorney representing the family of a man who was fatally shot by two park rangers while camping in northern Arkansas says the camper had a BB pistol on him.” According to attorney David Ransin, “the BB gun didn’t have an orange tip on the barrel to indicate that it wasn’t a real weapon.” A statement from Buffalo National River officials “says the park rangers fired at 34-year-old Jonathan Bolger on Aug. 20 after he refused to drop the weapon.”

3 Indicted On Big Game Hunt Charges In Alaska National Park.

The [AP](#) (8/30) reports that “a federal grand jury has indicted three men on charges connected to

illegal hunting” in Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve. The indictment also alleges that two of the men “used artificial sweetener harmful to canines on bait piles to try to kill wolves and coyotes.”

Great Smoky Mountains National Park To Get Emergency Radio Upgrade.

The [Asheville \(NC\) Citizen-Times](#) (8/30) reports that “in celebration of the organization’s 25th anniversary next year, Friends of the Smokies has announced a capital campaign to fund a critical radio system upgrade in Great Smoky Mountains National Park.” The total cost of the upgrade project is \$2.5 million. Jim Hart, president of the nonprofit, said, “Our target for this campaign is to raise \$1.25 million by this time next year, making it our biggest fundraising goal in a decade.” According to the article, “federal funding sources and other grants will be used to match donations to Friends of the Smokies dollar for dollar to reach the total cost.”

Office Of Insular Affairs

Trump Says U.S. Is Paying ‘Extortion Money’ To North Korea.

Coverage of the Administration’s response to North Korea’s latest missile launch over Japan continues, with media reports from cable outlets characterizing President Trump and Defense Secretary Mattis as giving conflicting statements regarding the response options available for the US. [ABC World News Tonight](#) (8/30, story 6, 1:35, Llamas), for example, said the Administration sent “mixed messages” Wednesday. While Trump “appeared to double down on a military option,” Mattis “seemed to contradict him.” Martha Raddatz said this isn’t the first time the Administration has sent mixed signals, “but in the end, North Korea’s leader listens most carefully to only one person: Donald Trump.”

The [New York Times](#) (8/30, Sullivan, Landler) reports that in a [post](#) on Twitter on Wednesday, President Trump “accused past administrations of paying ‘extortion money’ to North Korea and said diplomatic talks are not sufficient.” The President tweeted, “The US has been talking to North Korea, and paying them extortion money, for 25 years. Talking is not the answer!” The Times says it “was not clear what money the president was referring to,” and also notes Trump has “been both open to and against talks with North Korea.”

The [Washington Times](#) (8/30, Persons) says the President’s tweet Wednesday follows his previous comments that “all options are on the table” if North Korea continues its missile testing. On [NBC Nightly News](#) (8/30, story 6, 2:10, Holt), Richard Engel said that “just hours after the President’s tweet, Defense Secretary Mattis chimed in, seeming to contradict the President.” [Reuters](#) (8/30, Ali, Kim) reports that while Trump declared “talking is not the answer” to the standoff with North Korea, Mattis “swiftly asserted that diplomatic options remain.” When asked by reporters hours after Trump’s tweet if the US was out of diplomatic solutions, Mattis replied: “No. We are never out of diplomatic solutions.”

Trump, the [CBS Evening News](#) (8/30, story 9, 2:10, Mason) similarly reported, “seem[ed] to rule out the possibility that negotiations could end the building crisis with North Korea, but just a few hours later,” Mattis, “meeting with his South Korean counter-part, sounded less belligerent.” CBS showed Mattis saying in part, “We continue to work together, and the minister and I share a responsibility to provide for the protection of our nations, our populations and our interests.”

The [AP](#) (8/30, Pennington) reports, “True to form...Trump sowed policy confusion with a tweet” that “appeared to clash with efforts by his Cabinet members to safeguard the possibility of a diplomatic solution.” The AP says Trump’s tweet “raised fresh uncertainty” about the Administration’s strategy for North Korea.

Pointing to Wednesday’s comments as an example, a [Washington Post](#) (8/30, Jaffe, Lamothe) analysis says that “away from the cameras and apart from the nonstop drama of the White House,” Mattis has “come to play a role unlike any other Cabinet member,” becoming a “force for calm, order and, in the eyes of the president’s critics, quiet resistance to some of President Trump’s most combative and divisive instincts.” In what the Post says is “perhaps his greatest political feat,” Mattis has “maintained this air of independence without directly provoking a president who demands absolute loyalty.”

Trump Says ‘Talking Not The Answer’ On North Korea, Mattis Disagrees. [Reuters](#) (8/30, Ali, Kim) reports Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov spoke by telephone with Secretary of State Tillerson on Wednesday and “urged the US to refrain from any military action on the Korean peninsula,” which it warned would be “fraught with unpredictable consequences.” Lavrov “also

said Russia...believed any further sanctions on North Korea would be counter-productive."

U.S. Test Successfully Intercepts Ballistic Missile. The [New York Times](#) (8/30, Sullivan) reports the US conducted a missile-defense test on Wednesday off the coast of Hawaii and successfully intercepted a medium-range ballistic missile. Wednesday's test was conducted by the Missile Defense Agency and Navy sailors on the John Paul Jones, "a guided-missile destroyer." Missile Defense Agency Director Lt. Gen. Sam Greaves said, "We are working closely with the fleet to develop this important new capability, and this was a key milestone" in advancing the capability to intercept missiles.

[USA Today](#) (8/30, Michaels) says the test "raises fresh questions about the feasibility of the US military intercepting a North Korean missile test as a means of deterring the country from future provocative launches." Experts say the system "may not be a practical option since most North Korea missile tests have been aimed at the open seas."

Interior's Zinke Recommends Local Access To Monument.

The [Saipan \(MNP\) Tribune](#) (8/29, Bautista) reports that Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke "wants the Marianas Trench Monument to continue to be federally protected, but acknowledged that it should be accessible as a resource to those who live in the area." In his report to President Trump last Friday, Zinke recommended "that the 27 national monuments, including the Marianas Trench Marine Monument, should continue to be federally protected, with a change as to who may access the monuments' grounds."

The [Saipan \(MNP\) Tribune](#) (8/28) reports that the review of monuments was "praised by New England and Hawaii commercial fishing groups, along with New Mexico ranchers."

Strong Opposition Voiced To Reducing The National Marine Sanctuaries. The [Samoa News](#) (8/24, Sagapolutele) reports that "more than 98,000 whose comments were released on the federal portal – [www.regulations.gov](#) – in response to a US Department of Commerce notice issued June 26th seeking public input regarding President Trump's Apr. 28th executive order for the US Secretary of Commerce to conduct a review of national marine sanctuaries and marine national monuments designated or expanded since Apr. 28, 2007 throughout the nation." According to the article, "the vast majority of those who submitted comments strongly oppose any reduction to marine sanctuaries including the NMSAS, and some even specifically pointed to the importance of the Rose Atoll Monument to many marine species and birds."

National GOP Leaders' Push For Equal US Citizenship Is Backed.

The [Saipan \(MNP\) Tribune](#) (8/29, Encinares) reports that "Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and several members of the Legislature support the Republican Party's push for 'equal U.S. citizenship' to be extended to the three U.S. territories." The Republic National Committee last Friday adopted a resolution titled "Affirming Equal Citizenship for All Americans," which "says U.S. citizens residing in the 'territories of Guam, NMI, and the Virgin Islands,' regardless of their sex, race, color, ethnicity, religion or creed, are 'entitled to the full of enjoyment of their citizenship.'" The resolution calls for the U.S. Congress to "ensure that American citizens residing in the territories of Guam, NMI, and the Virgin Islands to have unfettered enjoyment of their American citizenship."

Earthquake Strikes Guam Hours After Kim Jong-un Threats.

The [Daily Mail](#) (8/30, Davies) reports that "a magnitude 5.2 earthquake has struck Guam just a day after Kim Jong-un promised to target a US military base on the island." The US Geological Survey "says the earthquake hit at 8am on Wednesday and that the epicenter was 51.7 miles (83.4km) southeast of Inarajan Village, a community of about 2,300 people."

Lolo Says Concerns Over N. Korea Threat Should Include Am Samoa.

The [Samoa News](#) (8/18, Sagapolutele) reports that "Gov. Lolo Matalasi Moliga says Congress needs to be aware that American Samoa is a US territory and a valuable platform for a military staging area and frontline defense, given its proximity to the Asian Rim countries." Moliga's "comments were made in an Aug. 15th letter to US Secretary of Interior Ryan Zinke, a day after US Rep. William 'Mac' Thornberry, chairman of the US House Armed Forces Committee appeared on CNN discussing the escalating tension between North Korea and the U.S, particularly on the recent threat by North Korean leader, Kim Jong Un, to fire four missiles into waters near the US territory of Guam."

Additional coverage was provided by the [Talane'i \(ASM\)](#) (8/18).

‘We Have To Make Tough Decisions If We Want To Survive’.

The [Virgin Islands Consortium \(VIR\)](#) (8/23) reports that Governor Kenneth Mapp said on talk radio “on Tuesday that the territory’s financial condition demands difficult choices relative to government spending, stating that the territory’s survival depends on its ability to live within its means.” Mapp said, “We’re just at a point where we simply have to make the tough decisions if we want to survive. Liken it to you in the community that have your family, if you’re a two parent or one parent household and somebody gets laid off or your hours get reduced. Or if you’re operating a business and the season goes off and the revenue is lower, you’ve got to make changes to survive because you can’t just spend the way that you normally spend; you can’t do the things that you normally do, so you must make the adjustments in order to remain balanced.”

The [St. Croix Source](#) (8/22, Kossler) reports that “as a cost-saving measure to help with the territory’s financial crisis, Gov. Kenneth Mapp sent a bill to the Senate this week changing the formula for premiums for active and retired government employees.” According to the administration, “the changes would save about \$21 million every year.”

Additional coverage of the Virgin Islands’ financial crisis was provided by the [Virgin Islands Consortium \(VIR\)](#) (8/25).

New CW Permits Now Available.

The [Saipan \(MNP\) Tribune](#) (8/30) reports that Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan has announced “that U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service has begun implementing his Northern Mariana Islands Economic Expansion Act, which President Trump signed into law on Aug. 22.” According to the article, “an additional 350 CW-1 permits are now available for current employees whose permits expire between Aug. 23 and Sept. 30 of this year.” The legislation “lifts the fiscal year cap on CW-1 permits from 12,998 to 13,348, the first time that the number of CW-1 permits has been allowed to increase.”

Additional Coverage: Next Target Guam, North Korea Says.

Additional coverage of North Korea’s launch of a missile over Japan was provided by [CNN International](#) (8/29, London, Berlinger) and the [Guam Daily Post](#) (8/29).

Top National News

Media Analyses: Trump’s Push For “Pro-Worker” Tax Reform Lacked Specifics.

Local TV outlets offered favorable assessments of the President’s push for tax reform during a visit to Springfield, MO, but national media coverage was generally critical, charging that Trump did not provide enough specifics. In a brief report, for example, the [CBS Evening News](#) (8/30, story 8, 0:20, Mason) said last night Trump “gave no specifics other than cutting the corporate tax rate from 35 percent to 15 percent,” [USA Today](#) (8/30, Korte) indicated he “was selling a tax plan that largely doesn’t exist,” the [Dallas Morning News](#) (8/30, Benning) that “notably lacking was any plan,” and the [Los Angeles Times](#) (8/30, Puzanghera) that the speech was “heavy on populism but almost devoid of specifics.” Noted in nearly all stories was Trump’s admonition to lawmakers that he doesn’t “want to be disappointed” by them again – an apparent reference to efforts to repeal Obamacare earlier this summer which, says [Bloomberg News](#) (8/30, Sink, Olorunnipa), “ended...with a spectacular defeat.” As [Reuters](#) (8/30, Morgan) reports, Trump went on to say, “I think Congress is going to make a comeback, I hope so. I’ll tell you what, the United States is counting on it.” According to [KOLR-TV](#) Springfield, MO (8/30, 6:01 p.m. CDT), that last comment “was met with some pretty enthusiastic applause.”

[KYTV-TV](#) Springfield, MO (8/30, 6:02 p.m. CDT) reported, “The President is talking [about] rewriting the tax code and he said something we all can appreciate: he is planning to simplify the process. Apparently it used to be two pages long, the tax code, and now it’s 100 pages long. He wants to take it back to simple.” KYTV added that Trump “said 90% of Americans right now, 90%, have to hire a professional tax accountant to file their taxes every year. He’s hoping that for the average Joe...those days are gone. Again, simplify the process, hopefully not make it so confusing, and for small business owners, he says ease the burden. And business owners here, at least, say it’s about time.”

The [Washington Post](#) (8/30, Paletta, Wagner) reports that “during the failed push to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, Trump seemed disinterested in fully utilizing the bully pulpit provided by his office,” but “on tax reform, the White House is planning a series of pitches by

Trump himself, building on his remarks Wednesday." A "senior Republican congressional aide said Trump's speech was exactly the kind of message lawmakers want to see the president deliver and only wished he had started sooner."

The [AP](#) (8/30, Lucey, Thomas) reports that "Trump, who rarely travels to promote his policy agenda, chose to debut his tax overhaul pitch before employees at a manufacturing plant" in Springfield, "a community known as the birthplace of Route 66, one of the nation's original highways, and one known as America's Main Street." Said Trump, "This is where America's Main Street will begin its big, beautiful comeback." [KODE-TV](#) ☐ Joplin, MO (8/30, 5:03 p.m. CDT) said that Trump's "plan is to bring businesses back to the United States by exporting our goods and not our jobs. He plans to keep our jobs in America by reforming our taxes which according to him haven't been reformed in over 30 years." [KTVI-TV](#) ☐ St. Louis (8/30, 5:04 p.m. CDT) showed Trump saying, "We need a competitive tax code that creates more jobs and higher wages for Americans. It's time to give American workers the pay raise they have been looking for many, many years."

The [New York Post](#) (8/30, Fredericks) reports Trump said his tax reform ideas "would help workers and the middle class in an economy rigged against them," and the [Wall Street Journal](#) (8/30, Rubin) also reports the story under the headline "Trump Pitches Business Tax Cut To Middle Class." Meanwhile, the [St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#) (8/30, McDermott, Suntrup) refers to a "fervent call for lower and simpler taxes, including a more than 50-percent cut in business taxes," and notes Trump promised "a 'pro-job' 'pro-worker' 'pro-America' policy." [Townhall](#) (8/30, Pavlich) quotes the President as further stating, "This is our once in a generation opportunity to deliver real tax reform for everyday, hardworking Americans. ... This is our opportunity to deliver real tax reform for Americans. I am fully committed to working with Congress to get this job done." Trump also exhorted lawmakers to "out the partisan posturing behind us and come together as Americans, to create the 21st century tax code that our people deserve," adding, "What could possibly be more bipartisan than helping people keep more of what they earn?"

While the [New York Times](#) (8/30, A1, Davis) – as did the [CBS Evening News](#) ☐ (8/30, story 8, 0:20, Mason) – reports on its front page that Trump "offered few specifics beyond a goal of a 15 percent corporate tax rate," [The Hill](#) (8/30, Jagoda, Easley) indicated that he "laid out four principles he would like to see in a tax-code rewrite: A tax code that's simple and easy to understand, a globally competitive tax code, tax relief for middle-class families and bringing back trillions of dollars in money held overseas." [Breitbart](#) (8/30, Carney) said "this was a departure from the principles of tax reform announced during the 2016 campaign," which included a pledge not to "add to the debt or deficit of the federal government."

In an editorial, the [Kansas City \(MO\) Star](#) (8/30) quips, "No wonder he went to Missouri to say all this rather than to Sam Brownback's Kansas, where he would have gotten laughs in all the wrong places."

Presidential counselor Kellyanne Conway said on [Fox News' Hannity](#) ☐ (8/30) that Trump went to Missouri and "basically said to them, 'We want those manufacturing jobs to come back. You deserve a pay raise, you deserve a tax cut.'" The instruction page is over 240 pages long. That's the instruction page. We are spending billions of hours, costing millions of jobs because of this draconian, outdated tax code." Trump "went to Missouri today to tell the nation and to tell the Congress...that this President is set on reforming the tax code and giving relief to middle-class families."

Conway said on [CNN's Cuomo Prime Time](#) ☐ (8/30), "This is basically like getting a pay raise for many middle-class Americans, middle-income earners, I should say. We are reducing their marginal rate, but we're also reducing the rate on small-business owners and entrepreneurs, who are already suffering under the yolk of Obamacare, which, of course, was one of the biggest job killers and tax raisers in modern history. In addition to that regulation they've had to overcome, they are now taxed in a way that hurts their productivity and their ability to attract and retain the American workforce, expand their operations, survive and prosper."

Former White House communications director Jen Psaki was asked on [CNN's The Lead](#) ☐ (8/30) if the White House should have postponed the push for tax reform. Psaki said, "If I were advising them, I would say yes, because the President's focus should be on Harvey. He should be communicating mainly about Harvey. What he is saying this week when Congress is not back is not changing the momentum for tax reform. Congress isn't even in Washington at this point in time."

Commentator Alice Stewart said on [CNN's The Lead](#) ☐ (8/30), "If he hadn't gone to Texas yesterday, I would say yes, postpone it. But going to Texas yesterday and showing his support and reiterating that the federal government is here to help you, that was critical. ... It's not going

away, this will be an ongoing effort, but walking and chewing gum at the same time, pushing the agenda down the road and getting the message out there. It's good to talk about the tax cut, the corporate tax, but also good for people watching. Contact your members of Congress, let them know you support tax reform, because this is an important agenda to get passed."

Mara Liasson of NPR said on [Fox News' Special Report](#) (8/30), "President Trump sounded like he couldn't wait to get to Election Day, but he's got a long way to go on tax reform before he gets to blame Claire McCaskill for the end of it. Tax reform is an opportunity for Republicans to get all back on the same page with the President." But Trump "is going to have to get his Republicans together. Remember, the Treasury Secretary said this is going to be passed by August and it hasn't been. And some members of congress and tax-writing committee members have different ideas than the President about the rates should be, what those corporate rates should be.... But, tax reform is something, or at least released tax cuts is something that Republicans should be able to unite around."

Byron York of The Washington Examiner said on [Fox News' Special Report](#) (8/30), "It was a disciplined speech, a focused speech. Trump stayed on script, which is always good news for him. The most important point he made was his second reason for tax reform: create more jobs and higher wages. Republicans are doing a lot of research on what they need to do to win next year, and it all boils down to more jobs at higher wages."

Trump Fails To Mention Cohn As He Praises Officials Involved In Tax Push. [Bloomberg News](#) (8/30, Jacobs, Olorunnipa) reports Trump "singled out several top advisers who accompanied him to a speech about overhauling the tax code on Wednesday, but not the man leading the administration's effort, chief economic adviser Gary Cohn." Cohn "was among the officials who traveled with Trump to Missouri, including senior adviser Ivanka Trump, White House chief of staff John Kelly, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and Small Business Administration chief Linda McMahon." The President "gave each of those five a shout-out," and also "named members of Congress in attendance."

[Politico](#) (8/30, McCaskill) points out that it "is unclear whether Cohn was inside the Loren Cook Company building as Trump spoke," but adds that "it's also not clear why Trump avoided a direct mention of Cohn, a potential candidate to replace Janet Yellen as chair of the Federal Reserve." Cohn "did criticize Trump last week during an interview for the president's response to the deadly violence at a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville."

Trump: If McCaskill Doesn't Support Tax Reform, "Vote Her Out Of Office." Also getting much press attention is the President's swipe at Sen. Claire McCaskill (D-MO). As the [St. Louis Post-Dispatch](#) (8/30, McDermott, Suntrup) reports, Trump "edged, briefly, into Missouri's high-profile 2018 Senate race, in which" McCaskill "is seeking her third term." Said Trump, "Your Sen. Claire McCaskill must do this for you...and if she doesn't do it for you, you must vote her out of office." The Post-Dispatch adds that comment "evoked from the crowd the biggest cheer of the day." The story says that present at the event were "most top Missouri Republicans, including US Sen. Roy Blunt, Gov. Eric Greitens, all six of the state's Republican members of Congress and most of the state's statewide elected Republicans." In fact, says the [Kansas City \(MO\) Star](#) (8/30, Lowry, Hancock), state Attorney General Josh Hawley (R), who is "exploring a run for US Senate next year against...McCaskill, was the only statewide Republican official to skip the president's visit."

The [Washington Times](#) (8/30, Boyer) reports that Trump also said, "We just can't do this anymore with the obstruction and the obstructionists. The Dems are looking to obstruct tax cuts and tax reform." Along those lines, the Times reports Trump's push is "likely to unify Republicans and raise pressure on Democrats in conservative states for some rare cooperation."

[Politico](#) (8/30, Gerstein) reported that Trump's "public electoral threat Wednesday against...McCaskill...triggered another round of questions about the administration's blurring the line between partisan politics and official business." According to "ethics experts...the main issue...is whether he was ad-libbing or whether White House aides planned for him to urge McCaskill's defeat." While "Trump is not covered by the Hatch Act, the federal law prohibiting politicking while on official duty...White House officials are subject to the measure." While "the White House did not respond to a question about who prepared the speech or how the related expenses would be paid for," press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said, "It's not a political threat when you ask a member of Congress to do their job."

In a piece titled "Why Claire McCaskill Is Holding Her Fire," Kevin Robillard wrote for [Politico Magazine](#) (8/30, Robillard) that Trump had "already launched an opening salvo at McCaskill, arguably the most vulnerable Democratic senator heading into the 2018 elections, saying [in a tweet] 'C.M.' is 'opposed to big tax cuts.' That tweet marked the unofficial start of what will be a two-year GOP-wide effort to disparage and eventually defeat" McCaskill, who "knows what's

coming, and she has chosen not to fire back, even at a president who is as hot a target for her party as Trump. That's because McCaskill knows the futility of trying to persuade staunchly conservative voters."

White House Targeting Manchin, Donnelly And Heitkamp As Potential Tax Reform Backers. [Politico](#) (8/30, Nussbaum, Schor) that even as Trump tried to put McCaskill on the spot, Vice President Pence was preparing to visit West Virginia – "a state Trump carried by more than 40 points" – to "appear alongside Sen. Joe Manchin...at a Chamber of Commerce event." Manchin "is up for re-election in 2018. Like Manchin, Sens. Joe Donnelly and Heidi Heitkamp...are also top targets for the White House," as the three "were the only three Democratic senators who didn't sign a letter circulated by minority leader Chuck Schumer this month outlining principles for Democrats on tax reform." A "senior administration official" is quoted as saying, "If they don't help us, it could end up hurting them in the 2018 midterms."

CNN Cut Away From Trump Speech. [The Hill](#) (8/30, Concha) reported that "CNN cut away early from...Trump's speech on tax reform Wednesday, breaking with other cable news and business networks." The Hill added that "seven minutes into the president's speech, at approximately 2:48 p.m., CNN switched to covering anchor Brooke Baldwin's Skype interview with a flood victim in Texas." Fox News, Fox Business, MSNBC, CNBC, Bloomberg TV, One America News and Newsmax TV "all stayed with the president's speech" for the 34 minutes it lasted.

Trump To Discuss Tax Reform With "Big Six" As Ryan, Brady Express Support. A "White House official" told [Roll Call](#) (8/30, Bennett) Trump "will meet with the 'Big Six' group of tax writers Tuesday at the White House." The "group of heavy-hitters includes: Speaker Paul D. Ryan, House Ways and Means Chairman Kevin Brady," Mnuchin, "Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Senate Finance Chairman Orrin Hatch, and Cohn." Roll Call adds that "one member of that group, Ryan, described Trump and congressional Republicans as 'united in our determination to get this done,'" while Brady "said he was encouraged by Trump's remarks."

[NBC Nightly News](#) (8/30, story 5, 2:20, Jackson) said "top Republicans on Capitol Hill tell NBC News they're confident tax reform will be easier than healthcare," but adds that "before Congress can get to that, it has to pass a budget first, as pressure from the President builds." In an editorial, meanwhile, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (8/30, Board) ties success on tax reform to any GOP chances of winning in 2018, and urges Republican lawmakers to gear their efforts toward crafting a bill that lowers taxes and helps spark economic growth.

Fox Poll: Only 14% Believe Tax Reform Likely To Be Enacted. [Fox News](#) (8/30, Blanton) reported that "the latest Fox News poll finds that just 15 percent of voters approve of the job Congress is doing, while about five times as many, 74 percent, disapprove." Meanwhile, "49 percent of voters feel it is important Congress pass tax reform legislation this year," but "far fewer, 14 percent, think it's likely to get accomplished."

Milbank: Republican Tax Cuts Will Balloon The Debt. In his [Washington Post](#) (8/30) column, Dana Milbank writes that Republicans – in the words of Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget President Maya MacGuineas – are starting to fall into a "predictable spiral" of pressing for tax cuts while failing to address their impact on the federal debt, as evidenced by the cuts in President Trump's announced tax reform plan coupled with increases in defense spending. Milbank argues that Trump "is poised to oversee an exponential increase in that debt."

Trump Could Request Harvey Aid Package Next Week.

The [Washington Post](#) (8/30, Paletta, O'Keefe, Debonis) reports that the President "could request a package of emergency funding to deal with the damage caused by Hurricane Harvey as soon as next week," according to "a senior administration official," but "no final decision on the funding request has been made and it could fluctuate based on conversations with lawmakers." [Roll Call](#) (8/30, Bennett) reports that Senate Majority Leader McConnell, House Speaker Ryan, Senate Minority Leader Schumer, and House Minority Leader Pelosi are expected to meet with White House officials next week.

However, [Roll Call](#) (8/30, Bennett) reports, "The White House has a message for those speculating on how much hurricane-ravaged Texas might need from the federal government and how a relief package might move through Congress: Pump the brakes." Press secretary Sarah Sanders said Tuesday evening "that it is too soon to say how a Harvey aid package might move through Congress." Sanders said, "We are still working through that process, I think the first thing is to determine how much they need, what the need is, and then develop the best process and plan for them." The [Washington Examiner](#) (8/30, Giaritelli) reports that Sanders said the President "will act to ensure Texas receives federal funding approved by Congress but skated

around what that process could entail.” Kellyanne Conway similarly said on [CNN’s Cuomo Prime Time](#) (8/30), “We don’t know if it will be weeks, months, years. But this president and vice president and Cabinet stand ready to assist those in need.”

The [AP](#) (8/30) reports that though the President “is promising billions...his Republican allies in the House are looking at cutting almost \$1 billion from disaster accounts to help finance the president’s border wall.” The pending FEMA budget cut “is part of a massive spending bill that the House is scheduled to consider next week.” [McClatchy](#) (8/30, Clark) reports that though the President has threatened to shut down the government over border wall funding, that “may be muted by negotiations among congressional leaders” eager to avoid a shutdown “and quickly deliver aid to storm-ravaged Texas.”

The [Houston Chronicle](#) (8/30, Ramirez) reports, “Harvey is gone, but the difficult task of rebuilding the Texas coast still remains.” At a joint news conference, Sen. Ted Cruz, Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee (D-TX), and Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner “stressed the need to push a united message to Washington.” Jackson Lee said, “This is a bipartisan effort. I’ve gotten calls from across the country from Republicans and Democrats.”

Rep. Joaquin Castro (D-TX) said on [MSNBC’s Morning Joe](#) (8/30), “I hope Congress can go back into session and Texas will be a supplemental package in the tens of billions of dollars. I hope we can support that as Republicans and Democrats and really learn a lesson not to get into the divisiveness that characterized the Superstorm Sandy relief package.”

Rep. Mike McCaul (R-TX) was asked on [MSNBC’s Morning Joe](#) (8/30) if he is concerned that federal agencies have sufficient personnel in their regional offices to handle the recovery process. McCaul said, “I believe they have it right now. The question is at what point is that going to be depleted and we are going to need assistance coming in. ... FEMA has a \$3 billion disaster recovery fund. That will be depleted I think fairly soon as you all well know, this will be a topic of conversation when we get back into Congress. There will be an emergency supplemental bill to deal with this.”

Rep. Ted Poe (R-TX) said on [CNN’s The Lead](#) (8/30), “The state and the local folks are responsible first for disaster relief funds, and I think they have spent all of those. There are some funds available already, but I do believe that there will have to be some type of appropriation specifically for Hurricane Harvey for the entire Gulf Coast, wherever it goes. ... I think people get it, that this is a national disaster that affects everybody, and I think there will be an appropriation.”

Joel Pollak of [Breitbart](#) (8/30, Pollak) suggests President Trump tie Harvey aid to his infrastructure bill, writing, “The issues are closely related, since there will be an urgent demand to rebuild or repair infrastructure damaged by the storm, and other states threatened by future natural disasters – not just hurricanes – will want to shore up their defenses now.” And “there may not be another opportunity to jump-start the president’s stalled infrastructure plans.” [The Hill](#) (8/30, Zanon) reports that Administration officials said Wednesday that the infrastructure package “will be broken up into three pieces, with the largest chunk of funding dedicated to projects that already have some private or local money secured.” OMB Director Mulvaney told state and local officials, “We’re looking at breaking this up into pieces. The largest piece of the package is going to be wrapped around incentives.”

[USA Today](#) (8/30, Jansen) reports that though Texas “has a larger-than-average share of bridges: 53,488 out of the country’s 614,387,” the state “takes above-average care of them, according to a review by the American Society of Civil Engineers: Only 900 or 1.7% are rated structurally deficient by federal inspectors. For comparison, 9% of bridges nationwide are rated deficient.”

Abbott Says Recovery May Cost Federal Government More Than \$125 Billion. The [Washington Times](#) (8/30, Dinan) reports that Gov. Greg Abbott said Wednesday that “he expects federal taxpayers will have to pony up ‘far in excess’ of \$125 billion to help the recovery effort. ... He said the federal government spent about \$125 billion on Katrina – though federal budget numbers say the figure was closer to \$100 billion – and Mr. Abbott said Texas will need more than that.” [Reuters](#) (8/30, Scheyder) briefly reports on Abbott’s statement. [Bloomberg Business](#) (8/30, Romero) reports that the “full economic impact is still unclear. Risk-modeling company RMS estimates \$70 billion to \$90 billion in losses from wind, storm surge and flood damage,” most of it in the Houston area.

Trump Rolled Back Obama Disaster Aid Order Two Weeks Before Storm. The [AP](#) (8/30, Biesecker, Lowy) reports that two weeks before the storm, President Trump “quietly rolled back an order by his predecessor that would have made it easier for storm-ravaged communities to use federal emergency aid to rebuild bridges, roads and other structures so they can better

withstand future disasters." Critics say the order "could force Houston and other cities to rebuild hospitals and highways in the same way and in the same flood-prone areas."

NYTimes Analysis: 2013 Sandy Aid Bill Was Not "Full Of Pork." The [New York Times](#) (8/30, Qiu) reports, "As Tropical Storm Harvey barrels down the Gulf Coast and talk of a disaster-relief bill begins, Republican lawmakers from Texas are rushing to defend their 2013 votes against spending \$50.5 billion on Hurricane Sandy relief." While GOP critics say the 2013 bill was "full of pork," a Times assessment finds the claims "hyperbolic and misleading," with most of the funding either "Sandy-related" or intended "to mitigate future storms."

Gov. Chris Christie said on [Fox News' Fox & Friends](#) (8/30) that Congress should pass a relief bill "quickly. The fact is that we know after Katrina and Sandy, we know the parameters of the kind of aid that will be necessary and how it will be used. The recovery time for Sandy has been half the amount of time it took for Katrina. We learned a lot from the mistakes of Katrina and they can learn from some of the mistakes they learned from Sandy."

US Economy Grew 3% In Q2, In "Best Quarterly Showing In Two Years."

The [New York Times](#) (8/30, Schwartz) reports that the Commerce Department on Wednesday said "that the economy had expanded at an annual rate of 3 percent in the second quarter of the year, better than initially estimated, and a substantial acceleration over the first quarter's lackluster 1.2 percent pace. The revised figure is still well below President Trump's target of 4 percent growth, but it is the economy's best quarterly showing in two years. 'The economy is stronger than you think,' said Chris Rupkey, the chief financial economist at Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group in New York. 'Bet on it.'"

[Reuters](#) (8/30, Mutikani) reports, "The upward revision from the 2.6 percent pace reported last month reflected robust consumer spending as well as strong business investment. ... Economists had expected that second-quarter GDP growth would be raised to a 2.7 percent rate." Reuters adds, "Growth estimates for the third quarter are as high as a 3.4 percent rate."

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (8/30, Leubsdorf) reports that there is currently little indication that a downturn in the economy is imminent. Morgan Stanley chief US economist Ellen Zenter told the Journal, "Typically in a business expansion, you would see growth start to arc downward as we get later into the cycle. ... It's incredible to sustain this kind of momentum this far into a business expansion."

[The Hill](#) (8/30, Ellis) reported that President Trump on Wednesday "touted" the upward revision "showing that the economy grew at an annualized rate of 3 percent in the second quarter of 2017, while attempting to take a shot at his predecessor, Barack Obama. 'We just announced that we hit 3 percent in [gross domestic product]. It just came out. And on a yearly basis, as you know, the last administration during an eight-year period never hit 3 percent, so we're really on our way,' Trump said during a speech on tax reform in Springfield, Mo."

Private-Sector Added "Robust 237,000 Net New Jobs" In August. The [Los Angeles Times](#) (8/30, Puzzanghera) reports that the private sector added "a robust 237,000 net new jobs" in August, "a sign that the labor market remains strong and should start pushing up wages. The figures released Wednesday by payroll firm Automatic Data Processing exceeded analysts' expectations of 185,000 and were a significant improvement over an upwardly revised 201,000 net new private-sector jobs in July." Said Moody's Analytics chief economist Mark Zandi, "The job market continues to power forward. ... Job creation is strong across nearly all industries [and] company sizes. Mounting labor shortages are set to get much worse."

Buffett: "I Would Guess We Are In A 2% Growth Economy." [USA Today](#) (8/30, Shell) reports that billionaire investor Warren Buffett "says it still feels more like a 2% economy to him despite the government" revising "its second-quarter GDP growth estimate to 3%." USA Today adds, "When asked if it felt like a 3% economy, Buffett" – appearing on CNBC – replied, "I would guess we are in a 2% growth economy now. Every now and then we think we are accelerating, and every now and then that maybe there's a double dip. It just seems to be a couple of percent."

Trump Administration Revokes Waiver Policy For Welfare Work Requirements.

In a move toward reimposing work requirements for welfare recipients, the Trump Administration on Wednesday revoked "an Obama-era policy that had urged states to apply for waivers exempting the poor from having to show they were either getting job training or looking for work," the [Washington Times](#) (8/30, Dinan) reports. The move restores the 1986 welfare reform law, which includes the work requirement, as written.

The [AP](#) (8/30) says the Obama Administration said in 2012 that "it would be willing to grant states waivers to some of the requirements" if governors "could show they could accomplish the

same welfare-to-work goals using different methods." While Ohio was the only state to apply for a waiver, it was "neither approved nor denied by the Obama administration." The state was told Wednesday that its application was being denied. According to Acting Assistant Secretary for Children and Families Steven Wagner, the waiver option is being replaced "by an expectation that work should always be encouraged as a condition for receiving welfare."

Administration Nixes Obama Rule Requiring Companies To Report Pay Data.

[Reuters](#) (8/30, Wiessner) reports that the Trump Administration has blocked an Obama-era rule "requiring US employers to report detailed pay data broken down by gender and race echoing business groups by saying it would not have the intended effect of addressing wage gaps." OMB said in a memo on Tuesday that "the rule was burdensome to companies and could pose privacy and confidentiality issues." Reuters calls the move "the Trump administration's latest bid to undo Obama-era policies designed to help workers or unions." A [Wall Street Journal](#) (8/30) editorial is critical of the rule and says the decision to block it is good news for employers and workers who want their pay to be based on merit rather than government mandates.

Trump Rolls Back Obama-Era Order To Fund Rebuilding After Storms.

Two weeks before Hurricane Harvey "engulfed much of Houston" in floodwaters, the [AP](#) (8/30, Biesecker and Lowy) reports President Trump "quietly rolled back an order by his predecessor that would have made it easier for storm-ravaged communities to use federal emergency aid to rebuild bridges, roads and other structures." The AP says that order "would have permitted the rebuilding to take into account climate scientists' predictions of stronger storms and more frequent flooding."

Editorial Wrap-Up

New York Times.

"Affirming Privacy, Rebuking India's Leaders." In an editorial, the [New York Times](#) (8/30) writes that the Indian Supreme Court's unanimous decision last week affirming a fundamental right to privacy has opened the door "to litigation on specific privacy issues down the line," such as dietary restrictions or gay marriage, and has reaffirmed "the fundamental freedoms that make all democracies strong."

"On Voting Reforms, Follow Illinois, Not Texas." The [New York Times](#) (8/31) editorializes, "In the face of America's abysmal voter participation rates, lawmakers have two choices: They can make voting easier, or they can make it harder. Illinois made the right choice this week" by enacting automatic voter registration. The bill, "which could add as many as one million voters to the state's rolls, was signed by Gov. Bruce Rauner, a Republican who had vetoed similar legislation last year."

"Beyond Houston, A World Awash." The [New York Times](#) (8/31) editorializes, "Houston isn't the only major city reeling from record rainfall and devastating floods. ... So far this summer, flooding has killed more than 1,000 people in India, Nepal and perennially flood-prone Bangladesh. The United Nations says at least 41 million people have been directly affected by flooding and landslides in South Asia, with homes and croplands destroyed." Like Hurricane Harvey, "these unnatural rainfalls carry two messages. One is the risk of unregulated development. ... The second message is that unabated climate change does, indeed, exact a price."

Washington Post.

"After Harvey, Flood Insurance Needs Reform." A [Washington Post](#) (8/30) editorial says the US is "long overdue for smart reforms" to the National Flood Insurance Program, and that the reauthorization deadline next month should "galvanize Congress to ensure enough money is available to pay current commitments, while reforming NFIP for the future." The Post argues that "what's needed are tougher flood-risk mitigation requirements, more realistic premiums and encouragement for private-sector involvement in the business, based on modern technology that may enable insurance companies to underwrite risks they could not have underwritten in the 1960s."

"Will The Divider In Chief Strike Again?" In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (8/30) wonders whether President Trump will dismantle DACA as requested by Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton and other conservatives who challenge the program as unconstitutional or preserve it. The

Post concludes, "There is no clamor for ending DACA, which polls suggest enjoys broad public support. Ending the program would be a cruel betrayal and a gratuitous blow against the very people Mr. Trump just months ago described as 'incredible.'"

"Fixing The 'Grocery Gap.'" In an editorial, the [Washington Post](#) (8/30) writes that the DC government needs to address better the lack of grocery options in the city's Wards 7 and 8, arguing that the lack of access to fresh produce and other foods "can lead to poor nutrition and bad health outcomes," especially among "some of the city's most vulnerable people."

Wall Street Journal.

"The GOP's Tax Reform Baseline." In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (8/30, Board) ties success on tax reform to any GOP chances of winning in 2018, and urges Republican lawmakers to gear their efforts toward crafting a bill that lowers taxes and helps spark economic growth.

"Rauner's Big School Victory." In an editorial, the [Wall Street Journal](#) (8/30) writes that Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner on Wednesday signed into law a state private-school choice program providing \$100 million in tax-credit scholarships that will allow low-income students to attend private schools. The Journal argues that the law – which also includes \$450 million for Chicago Public Schools – offers a great step forward in helping poorer students have greater academic opportunities.

"An Obama Pay Rule Dies." A [Wall Street Journal](#) (8/30) editorial is critical of an Obama-era rule requiring companies to report pay data broken down by gender and race, and says the Trump Administration's decision to block it is good news for employers and workers who want their pay to be based on merit rather than government mandates.

Big Picture

Headlines From Today's Front Pages.

Wall Street Journal:

[Harvey Ripples Through US, Global Energy Markets](#)

[Harvey Delivers Another Blow To Katrina Survivors](#)

[Cadillac, After Years Of Struggle, Has Found Its Sweet Spot: China](#)

[Paul Manafort's Overseas Political Work Had A Notable Patron: A Russian Oligarch](#)

New York Times:

[As Houston Looks To Recover, Small Towns Now Bear The Brunt](#)

[A Storm Forces Houston, The Limitless City, To Consider Its Limits](#)

[Clinging To Her Drowning "Mama," A Little Girl Survives The Raging Flood](#)

[Trump In Missouri Lays Groundwork For Tax Overhaul But Offers No Details](#)

[Google Critic Ousted From Think Tank Funded By The Tech Giant](#)

[Diana's Legacy: A Reshaped Monarchy, A More Emotional UK](#)

Washington Post:

[Now Walking The Same Ground As Her Ancestors](#)

[Pentagon Chief Shows A Deft Touch](#)

[As Trump Embraces Egypt's Sissi, Abuses Rise](#)

[Harvey Crashes Into Texas And Louisiana, Bringing New Waves Of Punishing Rain And Emergency Conditions](#)

[For Police, A Grim Turn On Houston's Graveyard Shift](#)

[Next Are Insurance Battles And The Search For Housing](#)

Financial Times:

[European Fuel Armada Heads For US After Tropical Storm Harvey](#)

[Theresa May Vows To Fight Next UK Election As Prime Minister](#)

[David Tang, Bon Vivant And FT Columnist, Dies Aged 63](#)

[Tech Companies Endure Near-Doubling Of Requests For Personal Data](#)

Washington Times:

[Trump's "American Model" For Tax Cuts Encourages Republicans, Unites Democrats In Opposition](#)

[Army Finishes 5-Year Investigation, But National Guard Troops' Careers Still Left In Limbo](#)

[Harvey Leaves Massive Public Health Problems In Its Wake](#)
[Federal Judge Blocks Enforcement Of Texas Crackdown On Sanctuary Cities](#)
[Acid Flashback: CIA's Mind-Control Experiment Reverberates 40 Years After Hearings](#)
[Sheriffs Near Agreement To Act As Contractors, Hold Illegal Immigrants For Feds](#)

Story Lineup From Last Night's Network News:

ABC: Hurricane Harvey-Volunteer Rescuers; Hurricane Harvey-Airborne Rescues; Hurricane Harvey-Evacuees; Hurricane Harvey-Chemical Plant Danger; Hurricane Harvey-Forecast; North Korea Threats; New Cancer Therapy; McCain-Health Condition; Hurricane Harvey-Gasoline Price; California-Police Shooting; Hurricane Harvey-Houston Airports; Hurricane Harvey-Philanthropist.

CBS: Hurricane Harvey-Rescues; Hurricane Harvey-Neighborhoods Flooding; Hurricane Harvey-Victims; Hurricane Harvey-Airborne Rescues; Hurricane Harvey-Chemical Plant Danger; Hurricane Harvey-Climate; Hurricane Harvey-Trump Comment; Trump-Tax Reform; North Korea Threats; New Cancer Therapy; Hurricane Harvey-Philanthropist.

NBC: Hurricane Harvey-Airborne Rescues; Hurricane Harvey-Houston; Hurricane Harvey-Forecast; Hurricane Harvey-Gasoline Price; Trump-Tax Reform; North Korea Threats; Hurricane Harvey-Health Concerns; New Cancer Therapy; US Fathership Average Age; Princess Diana-Passing Anniversary; Hurricane Harvey-Donations.

Network TV At A Glance:

Hurricane Harvey – 40 minutes, 35 seconds
North Korea Threats – 5 minutes, 55 seconds
New Cancer Therapy – 3 minutes, 45 seconds
Trump-Tax Reform – 2 minutes, 40 seconds

Story Lineup From This Morning's Radio News Broadcasts:

ABC: Hurricane Harvey; Hurricane Harvey-Chemical Plant Danger; Texas Sanctuary Cities Law Blocked; California-Police Shooting; California-Wildfire; Wall Street News.

CBS: Hurricane Harvey; Hurricane Harvey-Forecast; Trump-Tax Reform; Texas Sanctuary Cities Law Blocked; Wall Street News.

FOX: Hurricane Harvey; Texas Sanctuary Cities Law Blocked.

NPR: Hurricane Harvey; Hurricane Harvey-Chemical Plant Danger; Texas Sanctuary Cities Law Blocked.

Washington Schedule

Today's Events In Washington.

White House:

PRESIDENT TRUMP — Meets with National Security Advisor H.R. McMaster; meets with the Director of the Office of Management and Budget Mick Mulvaney.

VICE PRESIDENT PENCE — Meet with storm survivors and survey damage in Rockport, Texas; participates in a media availability.

US Senate: On recess until 5 September.

US House: On recess until 5 September.

Other: No notable events scheduled.

Last Laughs

Late Night Political Humor.

Trevor Noah: "It is a time for Americans to help our fellow Americans. And as we just learned, it's also a time for non-Americans to help out too. ... I guess Donald Trump is right, some Mexicans are good people."

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